

FROM A CONDITION TO A CHOICE: GENDER AND MOTHERHOOD IN
ADAPTATIONS OF TORIKAEBAYA

BY

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I explore multiple versions of the Heian Period prose known as *Torikaebaya* with a principal focus on the two most recent manga adaptations, *The Change* published in 1987 and *Torikae Baya* published in 2013. I examine social and cultural changes in regard to gender and motherhood from the 1980s to the 2010's by studying the different choices authors made when creating the adaptation and contextualizing those choices within their contemporary time periods. I further argue that even though it is often stated that Japan lags behind the European and North American societies regarding gender rights due to its rigid gender roles and expectations, Japan in some ways, in its popular culture and especially literature, may be equal or even more progressive than those societies. *Torikea Baya* as well as other manga and literature are subversive and critical of contemporary Japanese society and law in connection with gender and offer not only critiques of current societal norms but an exploration of gender and sexuality outside social norms.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1: TORIKAEBAYA THE ORIGINAL	9
CHAPTER 2: THE CHANGE: THE 1987 ADAPTATION	18
CHAPTER 3: TORIKAE BAYA THE 2013 ADAPTATION	34
CONCLUSION BEYOND TORIKAEBAYA: OMEGAVERSE FICTION.....	52
BIBLIOGRAPHY	60

INTRODUCTION

“Gender is a shell game. What is a man? Whatever a woman isn't. What is a woman? Whatever a man is not. Tap on it and it's hollow. Look under the shells: it's not there.”

— Naomi Alderman, *The Power*

If you truly stop to think about it, gender is quite deceptive and evasive. It has been a major topic of discussion for many decades now but never more prevalent than in today's society. Identifying and defining gender politically, scientifically, and academically has drastically changed over the last few decades paralleling the radical changes in society's cultural ideas and constructions of gender. Gender has been defined and redefined many times over as it evolved in the wake of an ever-rising LGBT community with a bright spotlight on trans-gendered individuals. This is especially true of Japan which experienced a massive proliferation of literature and manga concerning trans-gendered and gender bent individuals during the 1980s following the emergence of cultural icons such as Roppongi Girl. The authors of such literature, especially in the categories of *shōjo* (少女) and *josei* (女性) manga, use a variety of techniques and devices to deconstruct the standard “normal” aspects of gender and sexuality, and then piece together these different aspects to create contradictory models. Over the recent decades *shōjo* and *josei* manga have become major sites for commentary and exploration of gender and sexuality that parallel the shifting and changing concepts and perceptions of what it means to be a man or a woman in contemporary Japanese society. Yet despite these publications that radically change and challenge an understanding of sex/gender, and sexuality it is often stated that Japan lags behind European and North American societies regarding gender rights due to its rigid gender roles and expectations. I argue that Japan in some ways, in its popular culture and especially literature, may be equal or even more progressive than those societies. Japanese society is very

conservative in terms of gender roles; however Japan produces cutting edge progressive literature regarding gender, that not only shows a disconnect between the Japanese state and Japanese society by being subversive of gender norms but also allows an escape from rigid gender roles into a fictional world.

An excellent demonstration of how literature and manga reflect larger cultural changes in Japanese society regarding gender can be observed by using adaptations of *Torikaebaya Monogatari*. The original story *Torikaebaya Monogatari* is a Heian period prose work written around the 1100s, that revolves around the lives of a rather unusual pair of siblings who change gender, a brother and sister who share an almost identical appearance. They are the children of a court minister known as Sadaijin (左大臣 Minister of the Left). Sadaijin loves his children but he is worried for them as their mannerisms are characteristic of their opposite sex. The female or sister gallivants around in the manner considered socially appropriate for boys and the male or brother secludes himself in the manner regarded as appropriate for girls. Unable to change them, the father utters the phrase which gives the work its title, “if one could change [them]...” (*torikaebaya...*). He then proceeds to treat his daughter as his son and his son as his daughter (The Changelings 16). The siblings are unaware that they are unusual until they are older (The Changelings 16). Sadaijin plans to have his children take Buddhist vows, but rumors of his “son’s” talents and his “daughter’s” beauty spreads to the court and Sadaijin is pressured into presenting his children in society through the coming-of-age ceremony (The Changelings 20 - 21). The siblings have coming-of-age ceremonies that are usually proscribed for the opposite sex: the sister as a man, and the brother as a woman (The Changelings 21). The sister becomes a Chūnagon (mid-ranking courtier) while the brother becomes a sheltered attendant to a princess and is known as Naishi no Kami (The Changelings 26, 34).

After being presented in society the siblings begin to worry that they will be discovered so they stay more withdrawn and detached than was considered proper (The Changelings 26 - 34). Chūnagon marries a woman but cannot consummate the marriage (The Changelings 41 - 44). Chūnagon's best friend Saishō Chūjō attempts to be intimate with Chūnagon's wife (The Changelings 41 - 44). In a bit of irony Saishō, attempts to seduce Naishi no Kami as well, not knowing he is male (The Changelings 41 - 44). Naishi no Kami avoids the pursuit of Saishō as well as the Crown Prince who has taken a liking to him (The Changelings 41 - 44). Unable to bear it any longer, Saishō forcefully seduces Chūnagon's wife fathering a child (The Changelings 44). Once Saishō learns of Chūnagon's true sex he then does the same thing and Chūnagon becomes pregnant as well (The Changelings 84). Since Chūnagon cannot be pregnant and a man within society she hides herself away from society and is ashamed to become a woman again (The Changelings 100). Concerned for his sister and worried about her sudden disappearance, Naishi no Kami dresses as a man and searches for his sister (The Changelings 129). He finds his sister and after Chūnagon gives birth, the siblings swap places in society with none the wiser (The Changelings 160 - 176). Chūnagon takes her brother's place as a woman and Naishi no Kami takes his sister's place as a man and mid ranking councilor (The Changelings 160 - 176). The story ends with both siblings excelling in society as their condition has been resolved (The Changelings 178 - 239).

Torikaebaya Monogatari offers a rich look into the sex/gender system of the Heian period however, for this paper I will be doing a close reading of the different adaptations of *Torikaebaya Monogatari* to explore more recent shifts in the construction and transgression of gender, sexuality, and motherhood in modern Japanese literature and manga. While it will briefly touch on the original Heian text this paper will focus on comparing close readings of the 1987

manga adaptation entitles *Za Chienji* (ざ・ちえんじ! [*The Change*]) by Himuro Saeko and Yamauchi Naomi (reprinted in 1999) with the 2013-2018 manga adaptation *Torikae Baya* (とりかえ・ばや) by Saitō Chiho and the different strategies and motivations manga artists have adopted to "translate" the work to match contemporary notions. I have chosen the 1987 manga adaptation by Himuro and Yamauchi because it is the first adaptation to be published as a manga. This marks a change in the form of its publication from the Heian-era medium that tells to a contemporary medium that shows and reflects publishing practices of the time in order to further circulate the story among the general populace. I chose the 2013-2018 Saitō version because it was the most recently completed manga adaptation and provides an avenue to obtain a comprehensive look at the dynamic shift in which gender has changed from the 1980s to present day Japan.

By comparing the different versions of the story it is possible to see shifts and changes in the representation of constructions of gender, sexuality, and motherhood from the 1980s to contemporary Japan as well the ways in which authors play with those constructions. In the 1980s literature utilized a more psychological approach because people wanted to gain insight into the whys of trans-genderism. However, by the 2000s literary content shifted towards a more social approach viewing gender as a performance. Rather than wonder about the reasons for trans-genderism, authors began exploring the possibilities that trans-genderism offered in the comprehension of the changing concepts of sex, gender, and motherhood. To demonstrate this shift I have chosen to focus in this thesis on two topics in each of these recent manga adaptations: (1) how the author introduces the siblings' gender issues, specifically the reasons behind them, which I call "the condition"; and (2) how the authors handle the key part of the story when the siblings switch places and genders, specifically the reason for their switching

roles. Motherhood is a major focus throughout each close reading as motherhood plays a different but important role in each adaptation.

To conclude and posit further possible research on the subject, this paper will move beyond adaptations of *Torikaebaya* and briefly explore other publications that play with gender and motherhood that occur around the same time as Saitō manga. In 2013 a large amount of Omegaverse literature was produced. The Omegaverse is an alternate universe where a new sex/gender hierarchy was created and three new secondary sex/gender designations were created, alpha, beta, and omega which were imposed in addition to male and female and motherhood became a possibility for males of the omega characteristic. Pregnancy and motherhood were forced onto male bodies with minor alterations to biologically allow for pregnancy. Yet despite these publications that radically change our understanding of motherhood as a female experience it is still stated that Japan lags behind European and North American societies regarding gender rights due to its rigid gender roles and expectations, evident by a lack of women in the workforce. Motherhood is an especially rigid concept in Japan. In spite of this, in contemporary Japanese literature, there is there is a large amount of fluidity to be found in previously rigid gender roles and experiences, In Omegaverse for example, motherhood is no longer portrayed as the province of a specific sex and the authors of such stories progressively exploring gender and sexuality in their work. These works are not only critical and subversive of gender norms in Japan but also provide an outlet of emotion and means of self-exploration. Such literature can be seen as a substitute for social change that isn't happening as well as a way of promoting social change that the author and readers want to see happen.

A Note on Methodology: Problems in Academia: Eurocentrism

Within academia there are some major issues that must be addressed before my analysis can proceed, specifically the divisions and borders that exist within discipline and theory. Area and cultural studies have been facing an uphill battle in academia because in order to study culture ideas, concepts, and complexities must be simplified. Culture becomes a reductive descriptor that lends itself easily to essentialization and hides the complexities and realities that scholars are attempting to analyze and describe (Allison 6). While this is true, it is not completely avoidable in any discipline that focuses research on Japan or any other country or community of interest. A person's identity is very much shaped by the groups, communities, and nations of which they are a part and the way of life, or culture of that community is a significant factor. In addition, there is no one culture shared by all people in Japan. Japan itself is a mixture of cultures and subcultures, and particularly its media are shaped by and react to those of other national cultures. To disregard culture because you cannot escape essentialization is like arguing that there is no such thing as Japanese people or Japanese culture. The Japanese and their culture clearly exist and, while it is true that what the Japanese and their culture are vary according to a given time period and location, to abandon the concept completely pushes it too far (Brumann). They exist but they are not unified, homogeneous, or incommensurable. As long as scholars are aware of the reductiveness inherent in culture studies and allow for problematization there is still merit in such research.

Another issue within the field that is related to culture is theory and ethnocentrism. Studying a culture that is different than one's own positions you as an outsider and unconsciously you will use the perspective and theories of your own culture to interpret your research. This leads to the major divide between area and culture studies and the field of theory

regardless of the discipline in which a scholar participates. The best example of this divide comes from Anne Allison's use and discussion of psychoanalysis to analyze Japanese culture in which she states:

“The resistance to psychoanalysis... [occurs] less because of its recognition of the psychic domain and more because of its construction of this psyche in terms of a western self. More accurate perhaps, the two become conflated and the theory as a whole gets rejected because of its Eurocentric orientation. To use psychoanalysis on a nonwestern culture is deemed a form of anthropological colonization, as seeing others in terms of a concept of self that is (only) western.” (Allison 16)

This applies not only to psychoanalysis but all theory, therefore graduate students in Asian area studies are constantly cautioned against the application of western theories as a cohesive whole and advised to proceed with caution and only use what can actually apply to localized area studies. Allison takes the stance that gender and sexual research should utilize western theories and simply correct for the Eurocentrism and the limitations that are found within those theories (Allison 17). It is possible to do this to an extent however it can be rather tricky when it comes to concepts of sexuality or gender identity which are so deeply rooted in a particular culture.

It is important not to impose European and North American constructions on a non-western country but that does not mean they cannot be applied at all. During the present time of global communication, there is not a single culture that hasn't influenced, or been influenced by, other cultures. The borders of a community like the borders of a country are permeable and malleable and thereby allow for cultural exchange and change. Europe and North America have had major influence on Japan and because of this, western theory cannot be completely disregarded. Many western theories on gender and sexuality have been translated into Japanese and applied by the Japanese to their own culture. Western theories have become a part of Japanese discourse and views on the construction and development of gender and sexuality in reality and in literature. Therefore, I apply certain parts of western theory to Japanese literature

while accounting for the differences in culture and history. For the 1987 adaptation I mostly use psychology and psychoanalysis to explore the idea of phallic power and a social critique on mothers for not being good role models. For the 2013-2018 adaptation, I employ a post-structuralist analysis as this manga works to subvert gender stereotypes but also reinforces them and gender performativity where I look at gender as a performance with clothes as the main tool in expressing gender in order to understand and contextualize each adaptation. However before discussing these differences in detail a brief overview of the original prose and an explanation of adaptation is needed.

CHAPTER 1: TORIKAEBAYA THE ORIGINAL

Background of *Torikaebaya*

The story of *Torikaebaya Monogatari* is set during an indeterminate time in the Heian period (平安時代 from 794-1185 CE). According to Rosette Willig, who translated this story as *The Changelings*, the original *Torikaebaya* was written sometime between 1080 and 1100 and is called the *Ko Torikaebaya*. The version that Willig translated is known as *Ima Torikaebaya* or *Torikaebaya Monogatari* (今とりかへばや or とりかへばや物語) and is the only known surviving version of the story from this early period between 1100 and 1170 (*The Changelings* 4)¹. The evidence used for dating both of these versions is only speculative and the same can be said for the evidence on who the author(s) were and their sex/gender (Miner 248 - 250). However, the comprehensive way in which the psyche of the sister is explored points towards the author being either a woman or a man with an alarmingly accurate insight into a woman's psyche (Miner 248 – 250). Willig suggests in her introduction to the English translation that *Torikaebaya* was written by a woman who had actually experienced something like the sexual complications of the sister (*The Changelings* 5).

With dating and authorship set aside, the most important point Willig made in her introduction was that *Torikaebaya* was able to successfully connect with and entertain its readers enough to secure the story's survival (*The Changelings* 7-8). The attitude of the author of *Mumyo Zoshi* (無名草子, literally "nameless book") towards *Ima Torikaebaya*, the only evidence of contemporary reaction to *Torikaebaya*, suggests that the story was relatively well-known even at

¹ Except for mentions of it in the *Mumyo Zoshi*, (ca. 1198-1202), a critique of *monogatari* attributed to the Daughter of Fujiwara no Shunzei (around 1170-1252), the original version has passed out of existence. For the ease of analysis later in this paper I am referring to *Ima Torikaebaya* as the "original version" because it is the oldest version in existence.

that time. From the inclusion of the story's poems in poetry anthologies of the period it can be inferred that the tale was popular (The Changelings 3). This popularity suggests that there may have been people during that time who pondered the idea what it was like to be of the other sex/gender, and perhaps even some who would have liked to actually try changing their sex/gender. This indication of popularity is crucial as it implies just how plausible the plot in *Torikaebaya* was, and when paired with Willig's suggestion that it could contain autobiographical elements from the author's life it can be inferred that the tale illustrates how individuals who did not naturally conform to the sex/gender system of the time were viewed during the time it was written. This illustration of non-conforming individuals in terms of sex, gender, and sexuality is one of the main themes of the story and suggests how court society during the Heian period defined the categories of male and female on the basis of biological sex (Miner 248 - 250).

Names and Pronouns

Sadaijin, like the other names in this work is actually a court title meaning the Minister of the Left. Chūnagon is also a court title as is Naishi No Kami. It is common in Heian period works to refer to the characters by title. This can be confusing because when their title changes so do their name. For the purpose of continuity I will refer to the father as Sadaijin, the sister as Chūnagon, and the brother as Naishi no Kami for this version of the story even though their ranks change throughout the story. When looking at the modern versions of the story I will use the names chosen by the adapters as they have different names in the modern adaptations. Names are extremely important to identity therefore it is also important to note the use of court rank as someone's name. Pronouns are also important to look at as well. In contrast to other scholars, I

have chosen to refer to Chūnagon as “she” and Naishi no Kami as “he” in all versions of the story to match with their gender assigned at birth since it is also the gender they end the story with. In classical Japanese, such distinction would not have been necessary since such pronouns did not exist. The pronouns he (彼 *kare*) and she (彼女 *kanojo*) were not used as such until the late 1800s in the translation of western works. There are masculine and feminine pronouns for I in Japanese as well as a difference in feminine and masculine speech. However, I am using Willig’s English translation and cannot examine such speech in the original classical Japanese.

Heian Period Sex/Gender System

With sex, gender and sexuality at the center of the story, *Torikaebaya* is especially useful in deciphering the sex/gender system of the Heian period court society the time as it offers a very clear view of what is considered feminine and suitable for females and what is considered masculine and suitable for males during the same time period. At the very beginning of the story, the description of the brother and sister’s activities show how each activity and even personality trait was ascribed as belonging to a specific sex. The brother is described as being extremely shy and taken to activities seen as feminine such as playing with dolls, painting, *sugoroku* (board games), playing the koto, and matching seashells (The Changelings 14, 17). The sister is described as being mischievous and taken to activities seen as masculine such as playing *kemari* (kickball), shooting arrows, playing the flute, singing songs, composing poems in Chinese prose which was regarded as very unladylike behavior. (The Changelings 15) This is one of the ways in which the Heian court differentiated between a man’s world and a woman’s world and shows that masculine and feminine activities were ascribed to a person’s biological sex (Ebrey 156).

Later in the story, Saishō comments to Chūnagon, once she begins to visually change her appearance toward being feminine, that it was because of her fondness for going out and mixing freely with people that she deliberately chose to look like a man (The Changelings 117). This shows the prevailing expectation during this time period that females were expected to remain cloistered while males were free to be social with other males while demonstrating their fluency in poetry and Chinese. Males were also expected to socialize with females at the time and there are many situations in which the sister goes to and from the brother's dwelling space while the brother remains cloistered there with the other women. This is because men could cross back and forth, whereas women could not, demonstrating an asymmetrical sex/gender system characterized by social relations (Ebrey 156).

The “Condition”: Karmic Illness

This differentiation of the male/masculine and the female/feminine by the designation of certain activities as only belonging to one or the other, paints the picture of the sex/gender system during time period, and without this the author could not set up the sibling's unusual predicament. The sibling's father Sadaijin is distraught that his children are taken to activities that are not indicative of their biological sex as he exclaims, “If only I could exchange them, he mused, my son for the daughter and my daughter for the son” (The Changelings 16). The situation in which Sadaijin's children are involved causes him to worry; however, the most important view taken from Sadaijin at the beginning of the story is that this situation is “abnormal.” Sadaijin, who worried about the situation, is waiting for the children to become aware of their abnormality² (The Changelings 16). This concept of abnormality comes up again

² The word abnormal was taken directly from Willig's translation.

much later in the story as Saishō rebukes Chūnagon for how she view's herself while she is pregnant with his child and hiding away from society:

The way you are now is normal, Saishō tenderly rebuked him. Did you think the way you looked for years was reasonable? ... Though you were splendid, you can't go on as someone you are not. It may be strange for you, but a woman is what you should be. Even if your father learns about it, he won't think it wrong. (The Changelings 117)

Though seen as abnormal, the commentary in the Mumyo Zoshi's about *Torikaebaya* gives no indication that the sex/gender deviation the siblings were experiencing was considered absurd or improbable. In reality, problems such as this would have been regarded, at the time, from a religious viewpoint as a grave malady caused by karma. Buddhist ideas would have explained such an unusual condition/malady as resulting from bad karma which identified the second central theme and the most important one for this study (The Changelings 9).

These Buddhist views are sprinkled liberally throughout the text and are one of the main focuses of the Heian period story. The story demonstrates the workings of karma, specifically the concept that people are punished for their misdeeds even if it must follow them to the next life (Premodern History to 1850 153). At the beginning of the story, Sadaijin resigned himself to the reversal of the sibling's sexes as he believed it to be the result of sins from their previous lives (The Changelings 21). Even as Chūnagon becomes aware of her strange predicament, that she was different from other males, she herself thought there was nothing she could do (The Changelings 23). Later in the story when Chūnagon is seeking refuge away from the troubles she is facing she speaks with a prince. Upon learning about Chūnagon's peculiar situation he remarks that "Everything that has occurred is the result of events in your former lives and not in this one" (The Changelings 63). In other words, it is because of the workings of karma and something that happened in a past life that the siblings' sex and gender do not align.

Much later in the story the theme of karma comes to a culminating moment when Sadaijin has a dream After Sadaijin had many prayers recited at every possible mountain and temple, in a dream one night a priest worthy of respect and pure came to him and said:

Do not grieve so! The affairs of both Chūnagon and Naishi no Kami are settled. In the morning when it grows light you will learn of their circumstances. In previous lives their paths were crossed, and in retribution a goblin changed the boy into a girl, the girl into boy, and caused you no end of sorrow. (The Changelings 149)

This passage serves the purpose of explaining what happened in the sibling's previous life that led to their situation. It invalidates any choices the siblings have made in their current life as causal and firmly establishes this condition as a karmic illness, for which the remedy of which is also found in Buddhism.

The Switch: The Remedy and Motherhood

The reasons behind the siblings switch to their "proper" genders around the middle of the story are tied to Buddhism by Sadaijin's dream of the priest. Just after the priest explains to Sadaijin about the cause for the sibling's condition he states that:

A very long time has passed for the goblin, and as a result of your having entered on the path of Buddha and having had many prayers said as the years have gone by, the situation has been completely remedied. The man will be a man and the woman a woman and they will be made to prosper as you wish them to. The mental anguish you suffer is but a small part of the retribution from former lives. (The Changelings 149)

This second half of Sadaijin's dream explains the remedy for the sibling's mixed-up genders. It is only when the path of the Buddha is followed that the sibling's condition can be remedied. Since both the cause and the remedy is found in Buddhism, the religion is extremely important to the story. This importance was most likely due to the fact that these views were a daily consideration to the people of the Heian period. Buddhism was the main lens through which

situations such as these were viewed. The heavy presence of Buddhism is only furthered by the constant reminders that the sister constantly suffered from uneasiness about her condition and sincerely considered the standard Heian solution to life's problems, taking holy orders as nun (Miner 248 - 250). While Buddhism is the main reason given, it is also important to take note of the timing of Chūnagon's pregnancy in connection with this gender switch.

Chūnagon's pregnancy actually functions as the catalyst for the sibling's gender switch. It begins when Saishō learns of Chūnagon's true sex and he aggressively seduces her like Chūnagon's wife Yon No Kimi. As a result Chūnagon becomes pregnant which drives the sibling's switch (The Changelings 84). Chūnagon cannot exist in society as a man and be pregnant so she hides herself in Uji with Saishō. Here, her physical appearance is transformed to that of a woman through letting down her hair, blackening her teeth, and shaving her eyebrows (The Changelings 117). After Chūnagon is heavy with child she states:

“To go on constantly waiting and thinking is not to my liking; it worries me. But to change myself once more into the man I was before is impossible. When I deliver my child, I shall go to Yoshino and become a nun.” (The Changelings 135)

While it would be quite easy to physically return to the appearance of a man Chūnagon understands that she cannot do so after giving birth. While Chūnagon's motherhood is not the main focus this suggests that after becoming a mother there is no going back to being a man. Pregnancy and motherhood are purely female experiences that ends Chūnagon's ability to be a man. With very few other examples of similar writings from the Heian period to compare this story to, it is difficult to state that motherhood functions as a rigid gendered experience here. The Heian period is not my area of expertise but the issue of motherhood does become important when looking at the adaptations and the subtle changes that occur with this particular scene in the

story. With this basic understanding of the original version we can now turn towards the adaptations.

Adaptations: A Product and a Process

When most people think of adaptations, they think of a product, a film or TV series that was adapted from a book or novel that will always be inferior to its original source material in some way. Modern adaptations of classic tales almost always face heavy criticism, painting them as less valuable than the original material that they come from. In both academic critiques and journal reviews, contemporary popular adaptations are often dismissed as secondary, derivative, belated, middlebrow, or culturally inferior (Hutcheon 2). Yet each adaptation that occurs, especially those that occur after long periods of time, contain rich deposits of material for analysis because adaptation is not just a derivative product it is also a process. Outside of literature, the definition of adaptation is “a change or the process of change by which an organism or species becomes *better suited to its environment*” but there is more to adaptation within the field of literature (Lexico Dictionary) Within the field of literature, the literary scholar Linda Hutcheon states that to be an adaptation a work must fulfill three requirements in the process of becoming an adaptation. First, an adaptation must be an “acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or works.” Both the 1987 and 2013 adaptations are open about their relationship to the original, one of which kept the name of the original story. Second, the text must have an “extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work.” Again, both adaptations keep the main themes, basic storyline, characters, and situations as the original. Lastly, the text must also be a “creative *and interpretive act* of appropriation/salvaging” (Hutcheon 8). It is on this last point of Hutcheon’s definition that I focus in this thesis. Both

adaptations interpret and creatively adapt the original story to suit the contemporary culture of Japan at the time in which they lived.

The two adaptations that I have chosen to analyze occur more than two decades apart (three decades by the time the final volume of *Torikae Baya* was published) and cultural views of sex, gender, sexuality, and motherhood have drastically changed over this relatively short time period. As such, it would be difficult for a contemporary audience to connect with the culture of the Heian-period story in the case of the the 1987 manga adaptation *The Change*, and the 1980s in the case of the 2013 adaptation *Torikae Baya* simply because the culture of those time periods is so radically different. In order for the authors to connect with their audiences the original story of *Torikaebaya* had to be interpreted and then creatively changed and modified to better suit its contemporary environment and audience. Therefore, I believe these two different adaptations can showcase the major shifts in Japanese culture relating to gender issues over the last three decades by examining what stayed the same and what was changed in the story. These adaptations reflect the cultural shifts in Japan from the 1980s to the present day as each adaptation deals with the siblings condition and switch in different ways.

CHAPTER 2: THE CHANGE THE 1987 ADAPTATION



Figure 1

Adaptations and Background

The first adaptation that I have chosen to examine is the 1987 manga by Himuro Saeko (氷室冴子) and Yamauchi Naomi (山内直美) titled *The Change* (ざ・ちえんじ!)³. This was not the first adaptation of *Torikaebaya* since the Heian period. There was an adaptation storybook by a late Edo fiction writer and playwright, Ryutei Tanehiko (柳亭種彦), published in 1807. He explicitly noted the similarity of his subject matter to that of the *Torikaebaya Monogatari* in his preface where he states that he should have named his story *Shin Torikaebaya* or the *New Torikaebaya* (Willig 5). The next publications of the story were modern translations published from the 1890 through 2002 (See Table 1). One of the most notable translations was by Kawabata Yasunari (川端康成) shortly after the start of Japan's invasion of China in 1937. This publication is notable because the subject matter of *Torikaebaya* on the transgression of

³ The Change as a title is notable because the term was borrowed from English meaning change and is a term used in sports, specifically baseball, tennis, and volleyball, used to signify a change of sides in a game

sex/gender and sexuality norms would have been during this period of heightened imperialism, militarism, and pronatalist policies. Kawabata's translation was followed by a number of other translations, all of which made the tale more accessible to a wider reading audience and thus facilitated understanding of it (Willig 7-8). While these publications are not adaptations they are just as important because in all likelihood Himuro, Yamauchi, and Saitō (author of the 2013 adaptation) would have first encountered *Torikaebaya* through a modern translation, experiencing the translations as the original and using them as the basis for their adaptations.

Year of Publication	Editor/translator and Publisher
1890	Takjiro Noguch ed. Tokyo: Hakubunkan.
1891	Kokuban Jiten Series. Soshi Omiya ed. Tokyo: Hakubunkan.
1903	Katsura Maruoka and Daisaburo Matsushita eds. Tokyo: Itakuraya shobo.
1909	Katsura Maruoka and Daisaburo Matsushita eds. Tokyo: Meibunsha.
1914	Yoshikata Ikebe ed. Tokyo: Hakubunkan.
1925	Yoshinori Yoshizawa tr. Tokyo: Ochobungakusosho kankokai
1929	Kochu Nihon Bungaku Taikei Series. Kokumintoshō kabushikigaisha ed. Tokyo: Kokumintoshō.
1929	Taneo Sasakawa ed. Tokyo: Hakubunkan.
1937	Gendaigoyaku Kokobungaku Zenshu Series. Yasunari Kawabata tr. Tokyo: Hibonsha.
1947	Koten Hakkutsu Series. Hideo Odagiri ed. Tokyo: Shinzenbisha.
1960	Koten Nihon Bungaku Zenshu Series. modern translation. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo.
1960	Shukusatsu Nihong Bungaku Zenshu. modern translation. Tokyo: Nihon Shuhosh.
1971	Torikaebaya Monogatari. Tokyo: Shitensha.
1972	Shin-ichiro Nakamura tr. Tokyo: Kawade Shoboshinsh.
1976	Eichi Mitani ed. Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten
1978	Hiroshi Kuwabara ed. modern translation. Tokyo: Kodansha
*1983	Heian Koki Monogatari Series. Osamu Otsuki ed. Tokyo: Izumi Shoin
1992	Osamu Otsuki et all eds. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten
1993	Seiko Tanabe ad. Tokyo: Kodansha
*2002	Youhei Misumi and Keiko Ishino eds. modern translation. Tokyo: Shogakukan

Table 1: A List of Major Publications of Torikaebaya Monogatari in Modern Japanese (Kubota 169)

* indicates translations most likely used for the adaptations

The same year that Willig published the English translation of *Torikaebaya*, Himuro published a novel adaptation that she entitled *The Change*. This novel formed the basis of the 1987 manga adaptation published under the same title that was illustrated by Yamauchi. Himuro

was a Japanese novelist born in 1957 in Iwamizawa, Hokkaidō Prefecture. She is considered a significant author that helped start the *shōjo* novel boom in the 1980s that has continued to present day Japan (Loo). Himuro passed away in 2008 from lung cancer. Yamauchi is a Japanese manga artist born on in 1960 in Tokyo Japan known for her *shōjo* manga and has worked with Himuro on other works as well. *The Change* was the first major manga adaptation of *Torikaebaya*. It was originally serialized in a monthly publication and collected into four volumes that were published in 1987. The manga was then collected into two volumes and released again for print in 1999. There are also unofficial English translations of this version available online, suggesting a wide reception to the story (Mangakakalot.Com). For these reasons, I have chosen this version as the first focus for close analysis. As an adaptation, *The Change* contains many similarities and differences when compared with the original version, the largest change being first and foremost the medium in which it was produced.

Year of Publication	Author and Title
1080~1100	Unknown Author, <i>Torikaebaya</i> the Original
1100~1170	Unknown Author, <i>Ima Torikaebaya</i>
1807	<i>Yakkonoman</i> (奴の小万) play, Ryutai Tanehiko
1983	<i>The Change!</i> (ざ・ちえんじ!, <i>Za Chenji!</i>) novel, Saeko Himuro
1987	<i>The Change!</i> (ざ・ちえんじ!, <i>Za Chenji!</i>) manga, Naomi Yamauchi and Saeko Himuro
1998	<i>Torikaebaya Ibun</i> (とりかえばや異聞), Toshie Kihara
1998	<i>Torikaebaya Ibun</i> (とりかえばや異聞), Takarazuka performance, Moon Troupe
2013	<i>Torikae Baya</i> , Saitō Chiho

Table 2: Adaptations of *Torikaebaya*

Continuities and Differences

One of the major differences of *The Change* is the form or medium in which the adaptation was produced (Hutcheon 33). This is extremely important in particular because the adaptation changed from a medium of telling, to a medium of showing which alerts us that changes have occurred culturally and perhaps economically, so much so that the authors of the

adaptation chose a different medium than that of the original. There are many different mediums that the authors could have chosen such as a movie or an anime. Both of these mediums would have offered a unique and innovative way for the retelling of a classic novel; however, there were many things that happened culturally which designated manga as the most appropriate choice of medium for that generation. At that time, manga was a natural choice. The publication and popularization of the manga *Astro Boy* (*Tetsuwan Atomu* or 鉄腕アトム) from the 1950s and 1960s propelled manga forward as a literary medium that was paramount for the circulation of new and exciting literature as well as new adaptations of all kinds. The publication of *Princess Knight* (*Ribon no Kishi* リボンの騎士) forever changed the concept of *shōjo* manga from comic strips that teach girls proper behavior to a narrative and is considered the first modern work of the *shōjo* genre.

The genre or category to which a manga belongs shapes much of its content, point of view, and method (Miyake 359-361). It will affect how a story is adapted, especially the plot and visual components because the target audience is different for each genre based around sex, gender and age. As a *shōjo* manga, the intended audience is younger teenage girls between the ages of 12 to 18, even though it has an actual readership that ranges from ages 7 to 30 as well as variously aged male readers. The 1970s and 1980s marked the beginning of new *shōjo* subgenres such as “June” and gender-benders (Mizoguchi 49 – 75). The creation of these genres is crucial to the manga version *The Change* as it is categorized as a gender-bender manga. A gender-bender is a piece of literature written to disrupt or ‘bend’ mainstream or expected gender roles. Many times, this bending is used in order to challenge rigid gender roles and defy prevalent gender stereotypes. In gender-bender fiction, one or more of the characters usually undergo changes in either their biological sex, have a gender expression or identity that is the opposite of

their biological sex, or in the case of fanfiction have a sex/gender that is the opposite from the characters original canon. The so-called June genre, which contains an enormous amount of gender-bender stories and stories featuring homoerotic relationships between males, was renamed to the term “*yaoi*” (Mizoguchi 49 – 75) and the first anime format of *yaoi* was produced (Bollmann 42 – 46).

It was during this same time that massive amounts of media attention were given to transgender individuals such as Roppongi Girl Matsubara Rumiko. Matsubara, hiding her biological status as a man, had won a beauty promotion staged by businesses in Roppongi and became the cover girl for a poster campaign promoting the area’s clubs and bars. When it was revealed that she was transgender, she was quickly elevated to idol status (McLelland 198). In 1988 the popular lunchtime show *Waratte Ii Tomo* (It’s OK to Laugh) introduced a regular segment entitled Mr. Lady featuring transgender beauty contests and guessing games, thus providing opportunities for some transgender individuals from the show-pub scene to develop media careers and bring the transgender world to the attention of the wider public in Japan (McLelland 199). With growing acceptance and visibility due to such media attention to transgender and the animation of the *yaoi* genre, the popularity of the *yaoi* and gender-bender subgenres skyrocketed. This set the stage for a seemingly inevitable manga adaptation of *Torikaebaya*. The choice of manga would have offered the greatest return economically and it definitely offered the widest circulation as there was a large audience for such materials. However, the form is not the only change that was made in order to connect with a large audience.

Names and Pronouns

In this adaptation names do not follow court titles or appointments like they did in the original. Chūnagon is known as Lord Kira (綺羅さん or 綺羅さま) and Naishi No Kami is known as Lady Kira (綺羅姫). Changing names with rank throughout the story like the Heian period version did would have been very confusing for a modern reading audience as that is no longer a standard practice in Japanese literature. It is difficult to interpret why the authors chose to use the same name for both characters, only changing the honorific at the end of the name. The word Kira translates to “fine clothes” and it may be that the author chose the same name for the seemingly identical siblings to emphasize that they may only be told apart by their clothes. It is also important to note the pronouns used by each character. When speaking privately with each other, for the pronoun “I” Lord Kira frequently used *atashi* (あたし) and Lady Kira used *boku* (ぼく). When speaking with others outside the family and of higher rank both characters default to the use of *watashi* (わたし). *Atashi* is generally used by younger girls to sound cute or feminine, *boku* is generally used by boys or young men and is considered an informal and very masculine way of referring to oneself, and *watashi* is the formal word for “I” used by both sex/genders. I believe these pronouns were chosen to help remind the reader of the characters physical sex throughout the story as well as help differentiate the two characters who share the same name and same drawn appearance.

The Condition: Psychoanalysis and Motherhood

The story starts out focused on Sadaijin worried over his children’s peculiar situation. This starts the story off from the parents perspective which is important considering this story is geared for a younger audience. This sets the tone for the rest of the story which follows closely

with the original in main themes and ideas. Lord Kira is shown as being very outgoing, almost rude, and very interested in activities that males usually participate in. Lady Kira is shown as shy, withdrawn from her father and others, and almost fragile in constitution which is generally associated with females. This causes Sadaijin worry because they are not acting properly according to social expectations for their sex/gender. This is almost the same as the original, however there is one major change. It is made very clear that the siblings' gender issues are caused by their mothers and not by karma from a previous life. Again, one of the major reasons for such a change is the audience as it would be difficult for a contemporary audience to connect with the culture of the Heian-period story simply because the culture of the 1980s is so radically different from that time. Even though these recent authors chose to keep the story set in the Heian period, there is a major shift regarding the reason or explanation of the siblings' condition away from Buddhism to something more familiar to their intended audience. In the original *Torikaebaya*, the Buddhist belief system that was prevalent in the Heian Period accounted for the sex/gender misalignment, but in the 1980s psychological and social theories would account for the siblings' condition.

The reasons for this shift from a Buddhist explanation to a psychological one began with the modernization of Japan and the introduction of modern scientific thinking and scientific psychology to Japan. During the period of rapid modernization at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, some Japanese students traveled around the world to study at foreign universities and returned with the knowledge they had gained in order to pass it on to others. Modern scientific psychology was introduced to Japan in this way by Yujiro Motora (1858–1912) who obtained his PhD in psychology from Johns Hopkins University under Professor G. Stanley Hall and returned to teach at Tokyo Imperial University (Nishikawa 67). Thereafter, the

field of psychology continued to flourish ed and became localized in Japan. In 1979, Ryō Takahashi established the World Health Organization's Regional Center for Functional Psychoses in Nagasaki. In the following year, the Diagnostic Statistics Manual III or DSM-III was published in the United States and in 1982 was translated into Japanese (Kato and Takahashi 369-370). The DSM III is important not only in the US but internationally as it standardized terminology for disorders that had a group of symptoms that usually occurred together and introduced explicit diagnostic criteria. The DSM III created the term Gender Identity Disorder (*seidō issei shōgai* 性同一性障害), which is a term still frequently used in Japan today despite having been replaced in the DSM V with Gender Dysphoria (*seibetsu iwa* 性別違和).

This shift to a scientific psychological explanation in the initial set up of the siblings' gender issues is the most important difference in *The Change* from the original story. As stated before, in the original story the sibling's situation was viewed as a malady caused by karma as the result of choices from a previous life, but in 1980s Japan the situation was viewed in a vastly different way. In *The Change*, the reasons given for the siblings' condition resulted from parenting, specifically the mother, for both siblings. While Sadaijin does remark on it being fate (*un'mei* 運命) that his children should behave in such ways, it is only in connection with how his wives, the siblings' mothers behave (Yamauchi 15). This suggests that the children are trans-gender because their mothers are peculiar and do not act properly according to their gender. It is made quite clear that Lord Kira emulated her mother's misbehavior. In this adaptation, the explanation of Lord Kira's misbehavior is the result of a lack of discipline and a bad example set forth from her mother. Lord Kira's mother is shown to be loud, rude, unrefined, and too easy going when it comes to raising her child. However, in the case of Lady Kira it is not the emulation of the mother that creates the problem. Lady Kira is forced to be a woman by his

mother. At the very beginning of *The Change*, there is a flashback showing Lady Kira learning that he was actually male and not female. After he learns that he is male he wishes to dress and behave as a male yet his mother refuses and threatens to commit suicide should he choose to switch back (Yamauchi 25 – 28). This change in the siblings' condition is loaded with implications and sex/gender not matching is addressed right up front as a result of the bad education, inheritance of bad habits, and choices passed on from the siblings respective mothers. Both mothers are painted in an extremely negative light which is perhaps not too unsurprising for the 1980s with its critical view of women and mothers as a major cause for the country's economic and social issues (Allison)(Dumas).

This negative portrayal of mothers paralleled the social critique on mothers in the 1980s which addressed them as the cause for many social and negative changes occurring in Japan at that time. The crisis of a shrinking population struck the country hard and it was found out that girls were putting off marriage and consequently motherhood for later in life and having fewer children overall. This was accompanied by a mass proliferation of *shōjo* manga coupled with a *kawaii* (cute) consumer culture. Young girls spent time and invested money in all things cute, reading *shōjo* manga like *The Change*, fantasizing about the perfect love or romance instead of being involved in them. According to Barbara Sato, consumerism was a form of self-indulgence and fulfillment, but also permitted women an active role in Japan's economy (Sato 44-77). Consumerism was also a form of culture where women played a central role, and because girls' passions were directed towards an obsession with purchasing cute things, they did not need to find fulfillment in marriage and motherhood. With marriage and motherhood delayed, girls remained sexually unavailable for a longer period of time effectively elongating their time as a

shōjo – that is, the period between puberty and marriage. The social critique on mothers also fits quite nicely for the 1999 reprint of this version of the manga as well.

The 1990s witnesses the collapse of the bubble economy, the gay boom, and the rise of *enjo kōsai* (援助交際) or compensated dating in which girls participate in the selling of social and sometimes sexual attentions for sizable fees. These social and cultural phenomena led to a further worry about Japan's future all centered around women and the shrinking population. Women were already involved as a central role in economic growth by supplying relatively cheap labor, participating in a *kawaii* consumer culture, and when Japan's bubble economy ruptured *enjo kōsai* became a major concern because it continued a consumer culture which in turn continued the delay of motherhood and the shrinking population which would further affect the economic crisis. This fear of a shrinking population was further exacerbated by the gay boom since homosexual couples do not produce children. Thus a good portion of the story is focused around the Emperor and Saishō's concern over homosexual feelings. Saishō begins to fall in love with Lord Kira even though he believes that Lord Kira is male. Saishō struggles with this a lot because he is uncomfortable with the thought of being attracted to a male. He never discovers that Lord Kira is actually female but confesses his love anyways stating that he doesn't care if he is condemned for his queer love (奇しの恋) (Yamauchi 43). This would have resonated for the audience of the reprint and it is quite possible that parents, both father and especially mother, could be blamed for the rise in homosexuality for not providing proper role models for the child to emulate.

Not having a proper role model for gender is also found in, *shonen* anime and manga (primarily intended for boys between the ages of 12 and 18) which witnessed a proliferation of mother-son incest stories. These stories as well as other literature exemplified this fear and

critique of the power of motherhood which speak not only on sexuality but gender and sex, as well the absence of the father figure in the household. In Japanese society the main parent in the household is the mother, the father is generally absent from the home being required to work long hours and socialize with colleagues. With an almost completely absent father figure Freud's theory on the father figure being threatening and the fear of castration breaks down. Instead, in these mother-son incest stories the fear lies with women's control of the mother-son relationship which correlates to control of Japan and Japanese ideology in the future. As Anne Allison states:

“In the home women... not only act out sexually and in the position of aggressor... but they also do so with (and against) a son – the same son who embodies the future on which Japan as a nation depends ideologically. To put it simply, the threat is that women will become phallic not in the workforce, which restricts their entry, but in the home...[when] mothers come to occupy the phallus, men's occupation of it is endangered.” (Allison 145)⁴

The mother's phallic position in the home interferes with Freud's notion that the father will eventually provide a model for son, after the Oedipus complex. In this case, the incest actually occurs. This notion is also present in *The Change* as well even though no mother-son incest relationship is present. While at the beginning of the story Lady Kira exhibits the classic Freudian fear of his father it is immediately made apparent that it is the mother who has removed Lady Kira's phallic power (i.e. castration) and not the father by forcing Lady Kira to be raised as a woman. Since the Sadaijin has been replaced by Lady Kira's mother as the phallic power, the result is a son who does not know how to act like a man. Freudian theory and phallic power are probably not what the authors had in mind when writing or gearing this story towards young girls and it would not have been expected for them to pick up on such things. However, this speaks to

⁴ Freud forms the platform of Allison's theoretical lens as she utilizes the theory but allows it to warp in places where it cannot fit Japan and Japanese culture. She brings in a psychoanalytic theory known as the Ajase complex. For more see Allison's work.

the oppression and frustration that many women felt during this time of scrutiny towards mothers. Furthermore, this is not the only frustrations that the work expresses.

The Switch: The Result of Expected Motherhood

The switch that happens in this version of the story is similar to that of the original but with a major alteration. Even after Saishō falls in love with Lord Kira he never discovers that Lord Kira is actually female but confesses his love anyways (Yamauchi 43). After confessing, Saishō forcefully kisses Lord Kira but they are interrupted and Lord Kira flees back to her father's house thinking she has become pregnant from the kiss. (Yamauchi 49). Here again we see that pregnancy and impending motherhood is the reason for Lord Kira's disappearance and the start of her transition into becoming a woman. However, unlike the original story Lord Kira isn't actually pregnant and does not give birth to any child. This is actually a misunderstanding on Lord Kira's part because she doesn't understand sexual intercourse since no one has taught her. The men she associates with socially did not approach it because within the story males are expected to come to sexual desire naturally, while women usually become acquainted with sex (intercourse) through the gossip of other women who have experience. The result is that after speaking with her brother who is too embarrassed to fully talk about the topic of sex, Lord Kira thinks she is able to get pregnant from a kiss. This is a comment on expectations concerning girls sexuality.

It is not a coincidence that during the 1980s when Boy's Love began to flourish the authors painted Lord Kira so innocent and devoid of sexuality that such a misunderstanding could occur. Boy's Love or BL is a subgenre of *shōjo* manga focused around male-male homoerotic and romantic content that was originally viewed as a way for girls to explore

sexuality. Social and academic views on the sexuality (or the lack of sexuality) of girls and women is an area of discourse that is very contentious, and since the Edo Period onwards, girls and women were almost exclusively singled out as the source of sexual deviance and social disorder⁵. Rachel Dumas and John Treat explain that the *shōjo* figure has become “virtually analogous with the concept of cute or *kawaii* which connotes a childlike value system” and girls’ sexual energy is directed towards stuffed animals and all things materially cute (Dumas 26). Here we see female adolescence and childhood devoid of all sexual desire or at least adult sexual desire and a lack of libidinal agency. As Hattie Jones examined in *shonen* manga, desirable girls are depicted as virgins with no sexual desire or mothers, again with limited sexual desire and a focus on raising children. There are no depictions between the two categories (outside of pornographic material) and women are to be passive in sexuality, receiving the attentions of men but having little to no desire of their own (Jones 36-38).

While this is a comment on female’s expected lack of sexuality, I don’t interpret Lord Kira’s misconception as subversive, but rather critical of this norm and an expression of frustration. Had Lord Kira actually become pregnant it would have pushed the boundaries further and made the situation subversive. The way the situation was written makes it a comment about the absurdity of such expectations for females. It is also important to note that Lord Kira did not actually become pregnant, yet even impending motherhood prompts her switch to being a man to being a woman. Since the intent of the situation was not subversive, it is important to pay attention to other reasons for this major difference in this adaptation. Lord Kira did not have a child and never got pregnant. One of the possible reasons for this major change is the very young target audience.

⁵ See Stanley, *Selling Women*. for scholarship on prostitution and social disorder from the Edo period; See Shamoon, *Passionate Friendship*. and Robertson, *Takarazuka*. for scholarship on the woman problem of sexuality from the early Meiji period onwards.

With the target audience of *The Change* being at an age where it was much too soon for motherhood, it would have been much harder for the audience to connect with Lord Kira had she actually become a mother. However, the situation of motherhood is something that most of the targeted young female readers would have thought about as something expected of them in the future. This also provides the author with the opportunity to skip over the ethical dilemma of what to do with the child rather than follow the original story in which Chūnagon abandons her child to be raised by Saishō and a wet nurse. When Lord Kira believes she is pregnant, she disappears and immediately starts living as a woman. She lets her hair grow out, wears it down around her shoulders, and dresses in clothes appropriate for a woman. The transformation is immediate. Still, the most important thing to note is that impending motherhood and not actual motherhood is what ends Lord Kira's life as a man. While motherhood has been blamed for the siblings' condition, it is still a very rigid gender experience during the 1980s that marks the end of Lord Kira's masculine identity even though it is not the main focus of the story.

A good portion of the story, indeed the main point of the story before the switch, is focused on Saishō and the Emperor's queer love for Lord Kira rather than the transgender issues of the siblings. This also connects with BL themes that were and still are popular with young women. The story is not only concerned with the sexuality of the siblings but the confusion of sexuality in those around them, which would have been impossible to separate from the siblings' trans-gender situation. During the 1980s, gender and sex not matching was a major concern in the field of psychology because it was tied to sexuality and the three were not generally thought of as separate categories. Genders were supposed to match biological sex, which it was believed should dictate sexuality. In the DSM III as well as the DSM IV GID, transsexualism, and transvestism were listed under psycho-sexual disorders that needed to be treated because they

were disorders that lead to problems with sexuality, specifically homosexuality. This is why much of the story focused on Saishō and the Emperor freaking out about their attraction to Lord Kira, because they thought she was male. These feelings are not really dwelled upon or resolved and brushed aside at the end of the story when Saishō stays with Lord Kira's wife (the same as in the original story) and the Emperor comes to the conclusion that he was only attracted to Lord Kira because of her resemblance to herself as a female. There is a lot to be said about this confusing situation.

The Emperor first met Lord Kira out in the woods near a lake. She had been upset about her father denying her a male coming of age ceremony and left to a family property to cool off. Lord Kira decides to swim in the lake so she disrobes and goes for a swim. Upon returning to land she comes face to face with the Emperor while naked. Lord Kira squeals and drops down curling in upon herself to hide her naked form from this unknown male. The Emperor had been out in the area to escape from his own life and stumbled upon Lord Kira by coincidence. Lord Kira panics and comes up with an excuse for her naked appearance that she is being forced to marry a man she doesn't love so she had planned on killing herself. The Emperor believes her excuse and offers her a string of purple beads telling her not to despair. This is the point at which the Emperor falls in love with Lord Kira, as a female. Once Lord Kira has her coming of age ceremony and is presented as male, the Emperor is confused by Lord Kira's resemblance to the woman he loves and his attraction to a male Lord Kira. The Emperor then attempts to pursue Lady Kira thinking that (s)he must be the one from the woods.

Throughout the story he is attracted to Lord Kira no matter the gender that is being presented on the surface. This bothers him when he believe that he is attracted to a male but these feelings are brushed aside at the end of the story when the Emperor knows that Lord Kira

(now in her brothers place and assuming the identity of Lady Kira) is female and believes that he was attracted to her all along. This expresses confusion about sexuality and when the Emperor brushes off the issues, it represents what many women do with their sexuality. They brush it off, sweep it under the rug, because they don't want to deal with the issue. This presents another critical view of female sexuality. Unwanted sexual feelings pop up, like the Emperor's queer love for Lord Kira, only to be ultimately disregarded. At a time when women were exploring sexuality through BL this expresses frustration with expected social norms for female sexuality. Himuro and Yamauchi's adaptation expresses a critical view of contemporary social norms as well as expresses frustration from oppression and societal expectations regarding the female gender and motherhood during the 1980s. Saitō's newest adaptation does the same for the 2000s but takes things even further in trying to subvert social norms along with expressing a critical view of society and law.

CHAPTER 3: TORIKAE BAYA THE 2013 ADAPTATION

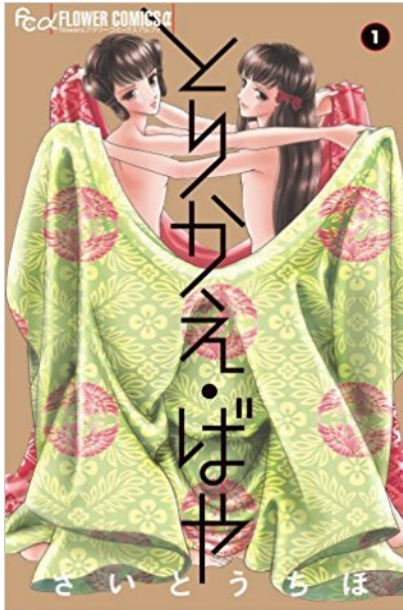


Figure 2

Adaptation and Background

The second adaptation I have chosen to focus on is the last and most recent adaptation that began its serial publication in 2013 as a manga called *Torikae Baya* (とりかえ・ばや) by Saitō Chiho (斉藤千穂) and finished serialization in 2018. Saitō is a Japanese manga artist born in 1967 in Tokyo. She is most known for her *josei* manga *Revolutionary Girl Utena* (少女革命ウテナ *Shōjo Kakumei Utena*) and won the Shogakukan Manga Award for *shōjo* for her manga *Kanon* (花音). *Torikae Baya* is a *josei* manga. *Josei* manga is a genre geared towards older teen girls and adult women and is between *shōjo* manga, geared towards younger teens, and lady's comics which contain an inordinate amount of erotic content. Readership ranges from the ages of 18 to 45. The target audience being older is significant in both the siblings condition and when it comes to the characters switching because many things are left open ended for the readers to pick up on and interpret for themselves according to their own experiences and expectations.

Names and Pronouns

There is a name change again for this version. Chūnagon or Lord Kira is called Sarasōjū (沙羅双樹) and Naishi No Kami or Lady Kira is called Suiren (睡蓮). Sarasōjū is a Japanese stewartia pseudo-camellia also known as the summer camellia (ナツツバキ) and was in bloom outside the room when Sarasōjū was born. Suiren is a water lily which was also in bloom and outside the room that Suiren was born. Instead of names following court rank like the Heian period version or having the same name with different honorifics like in the *The Change*, they are assigned distinct names. This shows the focus of names in terms of identity since it is identity that is the main concern of the story. Perhaps the most important part about having these distinct names is that after the siblings switch back, they are known to the public under their siblings name. So not only do they change genders but also names. Pronoun usage is also very different from the 1987 version as well. The siblings do not use *atashi* or *boku* in any instance, they use *watashi* when speaking with anyone, including each other and family. This is an interesting choice because gendered terms for “I” could have been used to provide the audience with a sense of how Sarasōjū and Suiren perceived themselves as well as how they wanted to be perceived by others. However, the author chose for the characters to use the general and more formal term of *watashi*. There could be many reasons for this choice. One such reason is that the author didn’t want to impose their own sense of identity for the characters onto the readers or provide foreshadowing for the siblings final choice of gender later in the story. As this is an adaptation, it was an option for the author to change the gender switch later in the story. Ultimately the author chose not to alter the story so dramatically. It may also be that the usage of *watashi* has become more common in modern Japanese and the use of more gendered versions of “I”, *ore*, *boku*, and

atashi have become less common. The less frequent use of these gendered pronouns may also mark a turning point in Japanese society in the way they think of gender and identity.

Not a “Condition”: Transgender by Choice

The story follows much of the structure in the original and Sarasōjū and Suiren are still a set of siblings who look almost identical. Sarasōjū was born female. As she grew up, she showed skill and interest in things that were seen as masculine/male such as archery and kickball. Sarasōjū found feminine/female things such as dolls and card games boring and says as much to her father when he attempts to correct her behavior. Before this, Sarasōjū didn't seem to understand that there was a problem with her wanting to do male things. Suiren was born male but likes card games and playing with dolls and is extremely scared of any male aside from Sarasōjū (possibly because they share the same appearance and Sarasōjū is actually female) (Saitō Volume 1, 19-20). In a trip out to the mountains and forests the siblings have been dressed in clothes that match their sex but this does not change their proclivities or personalities. Soon their party comes under attack by bandits in masks which the children mistake for a *tengu*⁶ (天狗) (this becomes important later.) Sarasōjū is rendered unconscious but as she comes to, she sees her brother Suiren dressed as a male and has the thought “that's me” (Saitō Volume 1, 26).

The siblings know they must escape the bandits and it must be Sarasōjū that takes the lead because of her skill in archery but she cannot do so in her feminine clothing. The siblings switch clothes and Sarasōjū, dressed as a male, shoots at the bandits as they escape. Later we

⁶ A *tengu* (天狗, heavenly dog) or long nosed goblins, are a class of supernatural creatures found in Japanese folklore, art, theater, and literature. They are one of the best known *yōkai* (monster-spirits) and are sometimes worshipped as Shinto *kami* (revered spirits or gods). Although they take their name from a dog-like Chinese demon, the *tengu* were originally thought to take the forms of birds of prey, and they are traditionally depicted with both human and avian characteristics. Buddhism long held that the *tengu* were disruptive demons and harbingers of war. Their image gradually softened, however, into one of protective, if still dangerous, spirits of the mountains and forests who are very mischievous. (Wakabayashi 234-242)

learn that this is the definitive moment that they chose their genders, by switching clothes. Here we see gender as a performance with clothes as the main tool to express gender. The siblings employ stereotypical femininity or masculinity to pass as the opposite gender which reinforces these constructed categories and the idea that gender is performative. They chose and express their gender by switching clothes in the forest. After a night in the forest the children are soon reunited happily with their father who is overjoyed that the children are okay. They all return to the family home and the father has come to accept that his children will be the “wrong gender” and embraces it as they are both put through their respective coming of age ceremonies (Saitō Volume 1, 45).

When Sarasōjū begins to have trouble, feeling out of sorts with her gender, the *tengu* image matching that of the bandit reappears in dream sequences and solidifies the reason behind their “unusual condition” and the reasons for Sarasōjū’s troubles. The face is the same mask that the siblings saw on the bandit in the mountains but he is surrounded by feathers, has what appear to be wings, and wears the typical clothes associated with the *yamabushi*⁷. This is the first but not the only appearance of the *tengu* to Sarasōjū. In the dream Sarasōjū is apologizing to Suiren who wanted to live a quiet life but can’t because of the troubles Sarasōjū is having. Suiren points behind Sarasōjū calling attention to the *tengu* and Sarasōjū recognizes it as the *tengu* that kidnapped them when they were children. The *tengu* states: “at that time you chose to go against nature and live as a man and Suiren did the same and chose to live as a woman. From that time you two have received the curse of the *tengu* and have come to play with a terrible fate.”

Sarasōjū responds “So this is why I feel it is so difficult to live as this sex?” The *tengu* asks “Do

⁷ *Tengu* are associated with a form of religious practice known as Shugendō, and they are usually depicted in the garb of its followers known as the Yamabushi. Shugendō is a mixture of religions, Buddhist, Shinto, Taoist, and Folk. But that is as far as the religious connection goes with this specific reference to Tengu, functioning more as a plot device rather than something religious. (Wakabayashi 234-242)

you want to know when this curse shall be unraveled?” Sarasōjū replies firmly “I want to know.” And the *tengu* roars back “When I eat the Emperor” and Sarasōjū wakes in a cold sweat and bolts up to a sitting position (Saitō Volume 1, 87-91). There are multiple pieces to consider in the interpretation of this dream but the most important point of the dream is that it clarifies the siblings gender situation and offers an insight into how views of trans-gender individuals have changed by the 2010s.

Before this time, there is no “reason” for the siblings to have a gender that differs from their biological sex, and before reading this scene, I thought that it might not be addressed in this version especially given the rapidly changing ideology around gender, sex, and sexuality. In the original Heian period story the siblings “abnormal condition” is the result of bad karma from a previous life. While the siblings were cursed by a *tengu* and their genders and sexes mixed up, it was karma from their past lives making the current condition a “karmic illness” following the Buddhist beliefs of the time period. In the 1987 version of the story, there is no *tengu* and the “condition” of gender and sex not matching is addressed right up front as a result of bad mothering which paralleled the social critique on mothers in the 1980s. In the more recent contemporary 2013 version, the “condition” is a choice and the *tengu*’s curse is that life will be difficult as a result of that choice. The siblings situation is no longer a condition, karmic or psychological, and is now a choice. This change from the previous manga is significant and different from the original because the *tengu* is not the reason for the mix up of genders, just the difficult problems the siblings face. Gender as choice is a very recent concept, and in this adaptation we that far less attention given to Saishō’s and the Emperor’s fear of queer feelings and more attention given to the siblings’ gender identities as choice. This is most likely due to the separations of sex and gender and their ties to sexuality.

From the 1960s, there were many cultural shifts that happened that set off a cascade of changes that brought forth a separation of sex, gender, and sexuality in both macro societal beliefs and scientific theory. It began with the coining of the term transgender in the mid-1960s. The original term was coined by John F. Oliven, a psychiatrist at Columbia University in his reference work *Sexual Hygiene and Pathology* to replace the term transsexual in reference to individuals seeking sex reassignment surgery around the same time the first Gender Identity Clinic opened to provide gender reassignment surgery in the west (*Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual*). However, the term began to include other individuals in the late 1980s and 1990s after an increase in transgender scholarship and the emergence of a specific discipline of academic study, known as transgender studies, and varying definitions adopted by people who began identifying themselves as transgender (*Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual*). According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary the current definition of transgender is “of, relating to, or being a person who identifies with or *expresses* a gender identity that differs from the one which corresponds to the person's sex at birth” (*Merriam-Webster*). This expands the term to an umbrella term that can refer to many different individuals, not just those seeking sex reassignment surgery. This includes, but is not limited to, people who are not exclusively masculine or feminine, people who are genderqueer, non-binary, bigender, third gender, pangender, genderfluid, agender, and cross dressers.⁸ Transgender differentiated sex and gender, and as a result sexuality, which had been tied to both was being reevaluated in society as well as in psychology.

⁸ Genderqueer - a person who does not subscribe to conventional gender distinctions but identifies with neither, both, or a combination of male and female genders. Non-binary - denoting or relating to a gender or sexual identity that is not defined in terms of traditional binary oppositions such as male and female or homosexual and heterosexual. Bigender - denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity encompasses two genders. Third gender - this is a relatively new concept to western thought but denotes a gender in cultures that have more than two genders or refers to a person who is neither man nor woman but has a gender identity. Pangender - a non-binary gender defined as more than one gender or denoting a person that identifies as a member of all genders. Genderfluid - a person who does not have a fixed gender. Agender – a person who does not have a gender or does not identify

It was in the 1980s that the distinct difference between sex, gender, and sexuality arose in Europe and North America as researchers began using each of these as very distinct and separate terms. Gender began to refer to self-identity and sex began to refer to chromosomal makeup and sex organs (DeFrancisco 11). Even today the determination of sex is a highly debated topic before it even reaches the formation of gender. Per West and Zimmerman sex is a determination made through socially agreed upon biological criteria to classify someone as female or male. The current criteria for classification can be genitalia at birth or chromosomal typing before birth, but they do not always agree with each other (West and Zimmerman 125-148). Once assigned a sex a gender tied to that sex is also assigned, however in transgender individuals sex, and gender do not match and that paved the way for understanding gender as a social construct which is separate from sex. This separation gave rise to Judith Butler in the 1990s and her theories that gender was constructed through a set of acts that correspond with (arbitrary) dominant societal norms (Butler). Butler argued that gender is simply a performance not tied to a person's sex (i.e. gender is performative) and it is this determination of sex that sets in motion a lifelong process of gendering (Butler) (Eckert 8).

Although the revelation of gender fluidity and gender itself as a performance is a recent development to English scholarship through Judith Butler, gender as performance has a deep-rooted and longstanding history in Japan, exhibited by both theatrical traditions such as Kabuki and Takarazuka. In 1629 the Tokugawa government banned females from performing on stage because of their erotic performances and the social disorder caused from patrons fighting for the favor and prostitution services of their favorite performers. Males then took up the woman's roles on stage and performed both male and female parts. Males who specialize in women's roles

with having any particular gender. Cross dresser - a person who wears or dresses in clothes opposite their biological sex.

are known as *onnagata* (女方) and have been said to portray the ideal standard of femininity. Historically Japanese females have been encouraged to follow this standard of femininity constructed and performed by kabuki males (Robertson 38). Westernized theatre at the start of the 20th century marked the return of females to the stage and in the western Broadway style revue known as Takarazuka, females took up the men's roles on stage. Females who specialize in men's roles are known as *otokoyaku* (男役) however they were never exemplified as the ideal standard of masculinity and males have never been encouraged to follow or emulate *otokoyaku*.

Conversely, outside the theater, and off the stage, a masculine female was considered as something pathological and deviant. According to Jennifer Robertson's study on Takarazuka, "the Takarazuka *otokoyaku* affects a masculine guise, while the Kabuki *onnagata* is completely transformed into a woman" and like the term *otokoyaku* expresses, the female only plays a man (Robertson 59). In other words, men can become women both on and off the stage but women can only look like men on the stage and only before marriage and motherhood. Here, we see that in Japanese theater specifically, "neither femininity nor masculinity has been deemed the exclusive province of either female or male bodies" (Robertson 51). This theatrical tradition of crossdressing challenges the categories of male and female whether they are considered essential or constructed, biological or cultural. However, in order for the crossdresser to "pass" they employ stereotypical femininity or masculinity which reinforces these constructed categories and the idea that gender is performative⁹. Clothes are the main tools with which these performers express gender and this is a crucial point for this adaptation. *Torikae Baya* was written and

⁹ There are also 8th century mytho-historical examples that could extend this further back into Japanese history, but I haven't tracked these down yet. They were mentioned as a side note in Takarazuka by Jennifer Robertson but no additional information was offered. This could also have to do with Kannon, a Bodhisattva that is androgynous and pictured as male or female in different cultures and times. This could also do with Kitsune who transform into beautiful women, regardless of their true sex, to trick human males into having sex with them. I have also heard about other transgender or androgynous Shinto gods depicted in the *Nihon Shoki* but most of this comes from popular imagination and manga, and I have not read any peer reviewed scholarship able to state these things as historical fact. (Robertson 38)

published after the full establishment of sex, gender, and sexuality as separate entities and the establishment of gender as performance, changes that reverberated around the world. Gender as choice and not something psychological is currently a large topic of discussion in Japanese society, which I believed is personified in the *tengu* of Sarasōjū's dream.

The *tengu* in this dream represents contemporary society with traditional societal norms and the constant looming problems that trans-gendered individuals face in a rigid gendered society that does not accept the choices of the siblings gender identities. From the very first page of the manga gender identity is set up as the main theme of the story as it shows an image of Sarasōjū stating "I am not a man, I am not a woman, so who am I?" (Saitō Volume 1, 3). It is unclear where in the story this first page of Sarasōjū's inner dilemma takes place but it is clear she is struggling with her identity in the face of the difficulties in her life represented here by the *tengu*. If you read the dream again with the *tengu* representing society Sarasōjū confronts the society causing her difficulties and demands to know when the difficulties will end. Society answers back that it will end when it eats the emperor, basically stating that the difficulties will never end and their choice will cause issues for the nation of Japan. The *tengu* also states that the siblings made a choice to "go against nature" and these words parallel some of the current perceptions of gender in Japan.

Gender is set up as performative and the siblings made a choice to live as the opposite gender in order for their actions and preferences to match their appearance and thus be acceptable in the eyes of society. That this choice goes against nature echoes many arguments currently held in Japan about individuals that violate current notions sex and gender. Nature, the natural, the normal, is often used against the notions of transgender/sex individuals. A good example of this would be the Gender Identity Disorder Act passed by the Diet in 2003. The GID

Act enables some transgender people to legally change their gender identity but requires them to be unmarried, have no minor children to provide a stable environment for growing children, and receive sex reassignment surgery so their body will match their gender (Taniguchi 108-110)¹⁰. Having such requirements reinforces the sex/gender binary which is considered “natural” and tries to eliminate transsexual and transgendered people who are not fully in the category of female or male. This is one of the reasons *Torikae Baya* and other manga like it which explore transgressive individuals are so important. This manga rather overt in its subversive and critical view of contemporary Japanese society and law.

Torikae Baya and its contemporaries contain situations like this that explore options that are constantly constrained in the reality of Japanese society. This well-known trope in *shōjo* and *josei* manga for girls to dress as boys explores the option of being male without the finality and rigidity imposed on trans-gender individuals by the state. In almost all cases, the girls dressed as boys, or *dansō* (男装) do so in order to achieve a social status or role that would be denied to them as females. In other words, it can be said that the basis for taking on male appearance stems from gender inequality, and that such characters are rather strongly inscribed with an opposition to conventional gender roles. In most cases, however, the heroine abandons her male disguise when she falls in love so she can marry and have children. This leads to the second key part of the story I wish to examine; the siblings switch of gender and lives.

2. The Switch: Sarasōjū

While the “condition” of the siblings is much the same, the reasons for the switch in gender are very different for each character so I will address the switch for Sarasōjū first

¹⁰ This also forces sterilization on transgender individuals and is a major contention in current debate both inside and outside of Japan on LGBT rights. There are dozens of articles in online news.

followed by the switch for Sui ren. A myriad of things leads up to the change of genders for both siblings but it is motherhood that really prompts the change. Sarasōjū is facing a number of issues in life and disappears from society, but what forces Sarasōjū to leave is that she becomes pregnant with her friend Saishō's child. Saishō falls in love with Sarasōjū before he finds out that Sarasōjū is actually female. Soon after he finds out he makes a move on Sarasōjū, who ends up pregnant. Sarasōjū is devastated because she cannot be pregnant and continue to live as a man (Saitō Volume 5, 110). Saishō whisks Sarasōjū away and she begins her transformation into an adult woman. This is the same as the original Heian period story with perhaps a small difference depending on how the story is read.

To me, in the 2013 manga version, the scene where Saishō and Sarasōjū get together comes off as coerced, as Saishō clearly pressures Sarasōjū into sex by continuing to pursue her even after she has professed no interest in a sexual relationship with him. However, my view on this may be because I have read the original version of the story. In the Heian period story, Saishō completely forces himself on Chūnagon and it is not consensual in any way. Online, there are blogs and reactions from people who have not read the original story that describe the scene as consensual (LGBTQ Manga: Torikaebaya). In the 1987 version there is no sexual intercourse between the two and it is only a kiss. Lord Kira is naïve and like a child, she misunderstands and thinks that she can get pregnant from just a kiss and chooses to disappear from society for the exact same reasons as the character in the other two versions. This is extremely important and situates motherhood as a very fixed gendered experience that continues to tie gender and sex together.

In Japan, the symbols of adulthood for females are marriage and motherhood and the term shōjo is used for young girls, but specifically denotes females that are between puberty and

marriage/motherhood. Crossdressing as well as other sex/gender transgressions typically seen in shōjo and josei manga end when the heroine falls in love and makes the transition in order to ascend to adulthood and marry her love and eventually become a mother. As the literary scholar Yukari Fujimoto states:

“men's clothing is the form taken in the temporary stage of life that precedes the one in which the girl becomes "female," and hence capable of being loved by the opposite sex as a woman... men's clothing is the expression of the girl's denial that she is a sexual being... a woman's reason for being is the possibility of love; other than as the sexual object of a man she likes, there is no necessity for a woman to be a "woman" (Fujimoto et al. 79).

Fujimoto lists quite a few *shōjo* manga in which the heroin switches back to femininity and being female so that she can progress in love but the most blatant example Fujimoto brings up of motherhood being the pathway to adult womanhood is Yuzuki Hikaru's *My First Time* (ボクの初体験 *Boku no Shotaiken*). A mad scientist transfers a set of lovers brains into the opposite bodies and the man in a woman's body gets pregnant and gives birth. After seeing this, the woman in the man's body realizes that her partner cannot go back to being a man and comes to an understanding that she must remain in her male body forever (Fujimoto et al 90).

Motherhood is what brings about the end of the *shōjo* and because of this, *shōjo* has come to function as a tool for critiquing problems in contemporary Japan regarding rigid gender roles (Aoyama 49)¹¹. This version of *Torikaebaya* also offers a critique of expectant motherhood by using the major twist concerning motherhood as Sarasōjū gives birth to a stillborn child.

This twist of having the child be a stillborn brings up a multitude of questions regarding motherhood which is one of the most important parts of this new version of the story as it pushes boundaries on contemporary views of motherhood and adulthood for females. Is Sarasōjū still a mother without a child to raise and care for or is the act of pregnancy and preparation to be a

¹¹ For more on Shōjo as a social critique see Dumas, *The Monstrous-Feminine in Contemporary Japanese Popular Culture* and Napier, *Anime from Akira to Princess Mononoke*.

mother mentally enough to make Sarasōjū an adult woman? Is it possible for Sarasōjū to return to society as a man since she will have no obligation to raise a child or has becoming a mother, even to a still born, made it impossible for Sarasōjū to remain as a man? Now that motherhood has been gained in some form, has Sarasōjū been granted access to become active in sexuality or must she still remain passive? We also see that while the initial knowledge of being pregnant and becoming a mother was devastating so Sarasōjū, she cries at the loss of her child and indicates that she was sad that she was not fully a mother and able to raise her stillborn child. Of course, none of these questions are answered or addressed outright so the reader is left to piece out the answers on their own according to how they view the character, the story, gender, and motherhood. The most important question that came to mind when reading this passage is also left up to the reader to decipher. Was this the result of the *tengu*'s curse, which Sarasōjū had seen an image of right before going into labor, and the fact that Sarasōjū had not fully chosen to switch to being a woman? Because Sarasōjū had not made the choice to become a woman was she unable to give birth to a living child as motherhood has been a rigid and fixed feminine experience? Is motherhood a choice?

2. The Switch: Suiren

The switch for Suiren was very different from that of Sarasōjū and while they are connected, Suiren's switch has more to do with sexual desire than with motherhood. Per social norms women are supposed to be sexually passive so when sexual desire arises in Suiren it creates an issue with his femininity. When Sarasōjū disappears from society, Suiren, who has been living as a female and attending to the crown princess Togū, becomes worried about his sister's disappearance. But the disappearance is not actually the reason for Suiren's switch. Over

the course of the story Suiren has fallen in love with Princess Togū and has become sexually attracted to her (Saitō Volume 5, 134). Suiren understands he and Princess Togū cannot have the same relationship as before and during the evening of a thunderstorm confesses to Princess Togū that he is male (Saitō Volume 6, 99-193). The princess faints and Suiren leaves, returning home to his father to change his appearance to that of a man. Sadaijin, the father, cuts off Suiren's hair as Suiren proclaims "the woman Suiren will become no more" (Saitō Volume 6, 110). This sexual attraction is a major issue and the reason for Suiren's transition as females are to be passive when it comes to sexual desire. Suiren's awakening of sexual desire marks the end of his passivity and his femininity and begins his transition to the active role of male in sexuality.

Read from this perspective, crossdressing and common transgender tropes that have been previously explored in *The Change* can support the idea of avoiding female sexuality by donning the guise of masculinity. However, since *Torikae Baya* is subversive, it can read along the same lines as BL. As a female-oriented narrative it reflects the subconscious female desire to escape patriarchal socially established norms of femininity such as beauty, motherhood, reproductive functions of sex, and the expectation of passivity in sexual desire. According to BL scholars the abandonment of the female body via the depiction of male homosexual relations in the case of BL and the disguised female body in men's clothing in the case of *shōjo*, emerges as a result of disappointment with a society characterized by sexual oppression (Nagaike and Aoyama 121) (Fujimoto 77-79). In other words, women are exploring their sexuality in masculine guise because it is socially acceptable to have sexual desire as a male and not as a female. Now that Suiren has sexual desire he must become a man which means he must leave his post as an attendant to Princess Togū and begins his physical transformation back to being a man. As his hair is cut Suiren weeps, his thoughts float across the page "I have died" (Saitō Volume 6, 111)).

The audience is then presented with Suiren's new appearance in his sisters male clothing, an exact duplicate of Sarasōjū. He then declares that he will do the only thing he can, leave to find his sister.

The choice of the author in using the words "I have died" to describe Suiren's view on becoming male are quite telling as it expresses the pain and the departure of self that many transgendered individuals feel when transforming back to a gender that they don't identify with. However, these words can also be seen as an expression of how females are viewed and a loss of feminine identity after their discovery of sexual desire. It is important to note Sarasōjū never expressed a sense of death when moving from being a man to a woman and that even the birth of a stillborn child did not cause such an extreme loss of identity. Suiren represents the death of feminine identity in the wake of sexual desire. This could simply serve to express the feelings of sexual oppression women face in Japan, but it could also serve as a critical comment on the disparity of social expectations of sexual desire between male and female by calling attention to this loss of femininity.

It is here that we see the image of the *tengu* again. Suiren is searching for his sister and passes by a festival in which a person dressed as a *tengu* is performing a dance. The face of this *tengu* is different but both Suiren and Sarasōjū see it, as Sarasōjū, heavy with child is nearby and forced to rest, sitting down as she goes into labor upon seeing the *tengu*. Immediately after seeing the *tengu*, Sarasōjū and Suiren see each other from afar but they do not recognize that they are seeing their sibling, they each identify the other as their former selves. The pages are flooded with the image of crows, further emphasizing the *tengu*'s presence, and Sarasōjū's thoughts again float across the page "Why am I seeing my old self? Do I want to go back to a

man so much to meet my old self? This pain is to me, a half man and half woman... is it the Tengu's curse?" (Saitō Volume 6, 140-151).

At this point in the story Sarasōjū is in a state of in-between, she is not a man but she also hasn't made the choice to be a woman either, and she represents the illegible. At this moment Sarasōjū's words show that she is feeling the pain of both being both genders at the same time, or in other words neither gender fully. The pain is the physical pain of labor but also the pain referred to here is that each gender doesn't have access to certain things, women to the social, physical, and independent activities available to a man, and men to motherhood. The switch of genders at this point is not complete for Sarasōjū even though her outward appearance has changed. Clothes and crossdressing are extremely important throughout the story however, here it is the gender identity of the character that is not in "natural" alignment with their sex. It is not until Sarasōjū makes the conscious decision to assume the gender identity that "properly" correlates with her sex that the switch can be considered complete and until that happens Sarasōjū is neither man nor woman, she is illegible.

At the moment the choice has been made we are once more presented with the image of the *tengu* appearing to Sadaijin in a dream. The *tengu* tells Sadaijin that his longstanding trouble will finally end, and as a reward for a connection in a previous life, he is answering the prayers of Sadaijin. The eon of the *tengu* has come to an end and the *tengu* transforms into the image of a priest and walks off. This is similar but different to the original Heian period in which the *tengu* was solely responsible for the siblings condition¹² as a result of his past life being crossed with the siblings. But again we see that it was the choice of the siblings in this life that resulted in the

¹² It is important to note here that I am relying on Willig's translation of the original story which has been criticized for this particular scene on page 149. I do not have the ability to read classical Japanese and view the original in its native language. But mostly the debate is that the Tengu turned towards the path of the Buddha not Sadaijin so I have chosen to refer to the original as the Tengu having turned to the path of the Buddha to go along with the criticism. See Pflugfelder, "Strange Fates. Sex, Gender, and Sexuality in Torikaebaya Monogatari." For more on this.

difficulties they faced and not a “condition.” With the siblings choice to switch and the final appearance of the *tengu* immediately afterwards, the switch is considered complete. In the volumes that follow the switch, the author shows the awkwardness of the siblings transition to their new genders as they learn proper behavior for their new gender show how the story is an exploration of gender and trans-gender. Suiren specifically has a hard time as he must study books and writing as well as learn to project confidence in his dealing in the court. Sarasōjū’s transition is mostly punctuated with the loss of activities she likes, especially archery, and dealing with her feelings of attraction for the Emperor. There is also a point in which Sarasōjū dresses as a man one last time in order to protect the palace and the Emperor from a magic evil by using a bow and arrow. While there is no internal struggle or change in gender identity here for Sarasōjū, this is the last time she will dress as a man as well as the point in which the Emperor realizes that the siblings switched places and comes to piece with his attraction and feelings for Sarasōjū since he knows she is female and not male.

This exploration of awkwardness and difficulty that the characters face proves the story is an exploration of gender and trans-gender individuals who may not be comfortable with gendered social expectations. This version of the story expresses the feelings of the trans community and individuals who struggle with being forced to choose a gender that they are uncomfortable with. *Torikae Baya* is a fascinating adaptation that showcases many changes in how sex, gender, and sexuality has been perceived in Japan from the 1980s to today. While most of the studies in the 1980s on gender and sexuality in Japanese literature and manga have focused on a psychological approach and reading the narratives to explain the motivations behind the creation and use of *shōjo* manga, there has been a recent shift in the field as *shōjo* studies is being approached from different angles. This is due to a major shift in literary content

from the 1980 and 1990s from a psychological focus and questions of why, to a post-structuralist ideology looking at structure and subversion, as well as gender performativity and questions of what is possible. Scholars such as Yukari Fujimoto have moved to viewing *shōjo* manga as a playground for girls and women in terms of the subgenre known as *shonen'ai*.¹³ In the 1970s and 80s *shonen'ai* first emerged as a tool to escape gender oppression and avoid sex(uality). Now however, that same tool has made it possible for girls to explore and play with gender and sex(uality) and the content of *shōjo* manga has also shifted. It has “opened up possibilities for them to shift their own point of view from passive to active engagement” with gender and sexuality (Fujimoto 79). A good example of this would be a subgenre of *yaoi* and *shōjo* known as Omegaverse fiction.

¹³ Shonen'ai is the subgenre that focuses on homosocial and homoromantic love between two males that has morphed into what is now known as Boy's Love or BL and includes a multitude of works that focus on homosexual and homoerotic narratives. Some scholars have posited this subgenre as pornographic material produced and consumed by heterosexual females.

CONCLUSION: BEYOND TORIKAEBAYA: OMEGAVERSE FICTION

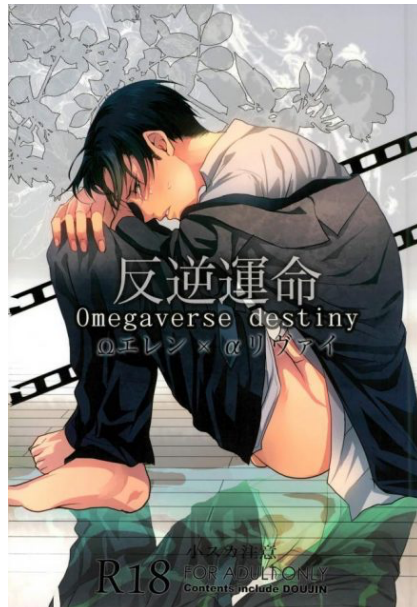


Figure 3

Why Omegaverse Literature?

During the same time that Saitō was releasing her publication of *Torikae Baya* many other authors were publishing Omegaverse manga and *dōjinshi* that were much more overt in their deconstruction of gender norms and the changing ideas of motherhood. It is this subversion that draws my attention and interest. Academics are beginning to look at what the function of literature, manga and other elements of pop culture do within society. While manga is one of the major elements of pop culture in Japan and offers the best platform for economical gain, it also offers the widest audience/readership and provides both authors and readers with an avenue to express dissatisfaction with current societal norms, a way to express desired social changes, and an avenue for the exploration of possibilities not available in reality. Omegaverse is overt in its subversion of gender norms and is normally created by marginalized authors that are generally self-published. The majority of publications are *dōjinshi*.

The word *dōjinshi* means self-published and covers a wide range of different types of publications. Self-publications have opened the door for queer to enter the public sphere of popular culture and has created a discourse available to the public from both a marginalized and a personal perspective. Though self-published works did not arise from queer issues it has become the main mode in Japan for expressions of gender expression and experimentation in popular culture. In the states the word *dōjinshi* usually refers to fan productions and parodies or pictorial fanfiction of popular manga and anime with their own spin on the stories. While fanfiction, the unauthorized adaptation and re-writing of media texts, is a complex and contested arena of textual production with its own hierarchies, norms and structuring practices, it hints at a gendered divide between legitimated and culturally approved works coded as masculine and fan work that is scorned and devalued coded as feminine. Fanfiction's legitimation and revaluation of the other – be it racial, sexual, or gendered – is enabled and enacted through cultural capital.

The Omegaverse: New Genders

Omegaverse is a fictional universe that imposes three new genders/sexes onto the body, Alpha, Beta, and Omega, raising the total number of sexes/genders from a binary to six. Alphas are considered the most dominant and are usually blessed with superior physical and intellectual abilities. Most Alphas are male but there are females. Physically, Alphas have a knot, much like that of a dog, when aroused. Betas are subordinate to Alphas and are often presented as having “normal” physical and emotional characteristics. Betas are exactly like our current reality. Omegas are generally rare and prized and are subordinate to both Alphas and Betas. Within the Omegaverse, it is understood that most of the time Omegas are female however, almost all stories revolve around male Omegas. Male Omegas have the ability to become pregnant, are self-

lubricating, and may go into heat, like a female dog, once every few months in order to facilitate pregnancy. Each sex/gender has a place in the power hierarchy with Alphas at the top and Omegas at the bottom. While it is fictional, there is no other genre more distantly removed from our contemporary reality than Omegaverse and its relative, the Mpreg (male pregnancy) genre. There are many different versions of the Omegaverse with subtle and even major differences depending on the author however, in almost every version male omegas have the biological ability to become pregnant and give birth. In other words, males are able to be mothers, never possible in any other type of writing or literature. Many Omegaverse stories revolve around this ability but also focus on the romance and love between the male omega and his male alpha partner.¹⁴

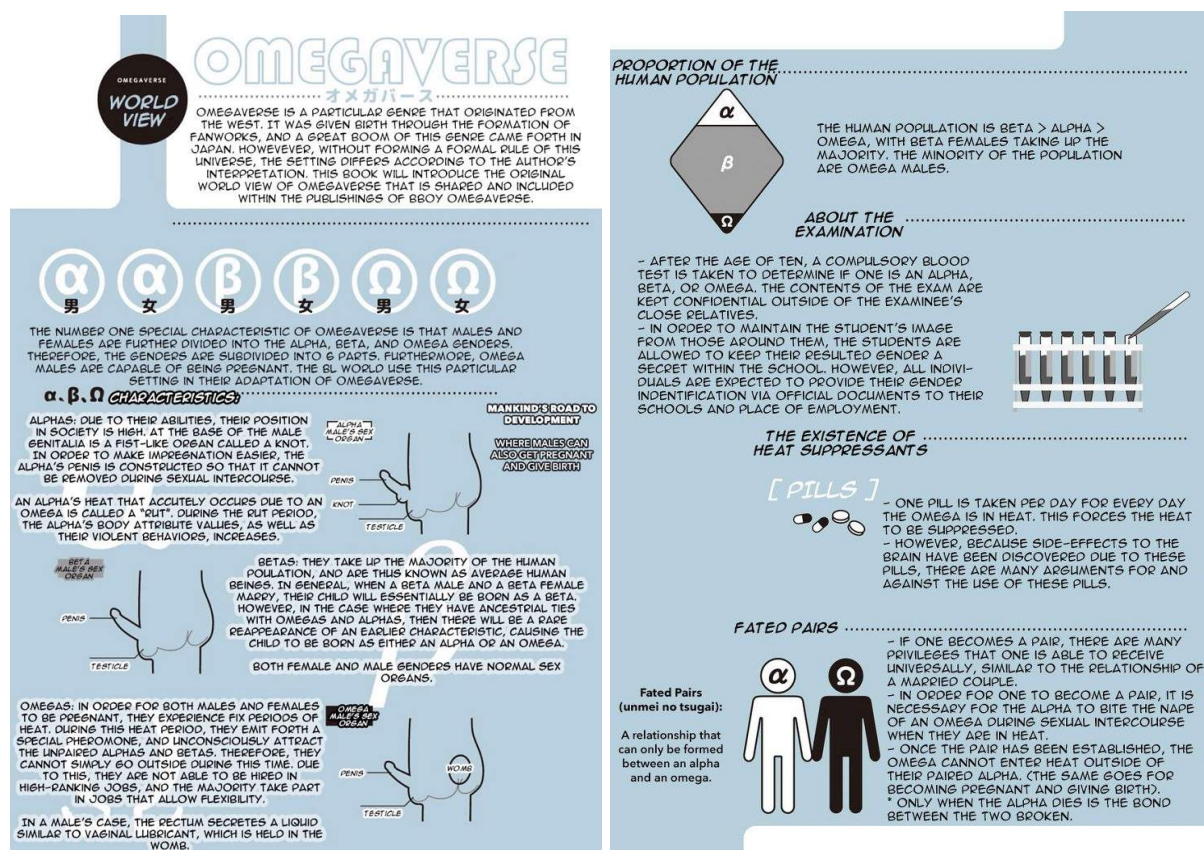


Figure 4: Most works include charts or explanations like these of the authors idea of Omegaverse. (Aminoapps.Com)

¹⁴ Generally, male omegas are paired with male alphas however other pairings are possible.

Like the last half of *The Change*, *Torikae Baya*, and other *shōjo* manga, a good portion of Omegaverse stories are centered around romance. Omegaverse stories are in search of a perfect romance and is a genre that is highly adaptable. Everyone is entitled to their perfect version of Omegaverse as the flexibility of the genre allows each author to omit tropes as they see fit or even add their own to create a whole new level to the stories. Though the genre is far from perfect in its subversive challenge to gender and sexuality, it has created a queer space to explore such issues while simultaneously allowing a space for the fantasy of the perfect love and romance. While not every story provides a progressive challenge to gender, sex, and reproductive norms, the most thoughtful and well-researched among them can be profoundly affirmative and lead to fruitful reader engagement that not only entertains, but even informs and advocates. By its very essence, Omegaverse is centered around marginal populations almost always featuring male omegas or female alphas as main characters and Betas (or the norms) function as side characters or are conspicuously absent altogether.

A good example of this is the *dōjinshi Love Letter* which is set in the Omegaverse and parodies the popular manga and anime *Attack on Titan* (Himemiko). The story features an Omega Eren who was raped as a child after beginning his first heat when trying to defend another Omega from being raped. He was picked up by an Alpha Levi who detests all Omegas for being slaves to their heat and their “biology”. The only Beta character is Armin, Eren’s friend and appears only twice with less than ten speech bubbles. The story explores the relationship of these two as Eren grows, and touches on the subjects of forced medication, the marginalization of Omegas, and the hardships that come when a person is at odds with their own biology and the biology of others. The strict gender society in the story references and modifies the hierarchy of

sexuality and gender that queer theorists lay out (Rubin). It also touches on Judith Butler's gender performativity as a male Omega Eren is forced to follow the role of what would be a marginalized woman in our own society after he has reached puberty.

Although Omegaverse fanfiction such as this offers challenges to current gender, sex, and reproductive norms by redefining the system with new terms and trying to unlink them with biology (the male and female body), it still defaults to biology. Within the Omegaverse, beings are biologically determined to be Alpha/Beta/Omega at the time of puberty. When a child reaches middle-school-age they receive a blood test to determine the second sex/gender they will acquire at puberty most likely through chromosomal determination. Medical personnel and science play a similar role in this fictional world. However, a major difference is medical personnel ask for the secondary sex/gender attained during puberty for admission purposes rather than sex at birth which is usually assigned by genitalia.

Another example from ever-popular Attack on Titan is *Hangyaku Unmei* featuring an Alpha Levi who suffers from erectile dysfunction (Hokōshayō). Eren, who believes he is a Beta involves Levi in a romantic relationship with the expectation of playing a sexually submissive role to the dominant alpha. However, Eren soon discovers Levi suffers from erectile dysfunction but laughs off the problem and takes the lead in bed when things turn sexual. Both of the main characters deal well with reversed gender and sexual roles until Eren's sex/gender suddenly switches from Beta to Omega. Eren loses all civil and legal rights he had as a Beta and must now cope with the very real expectation of producing a child to attain those rights again with a mate he loves who may never be able to sire a child or even satisfy him sexually as an Omega. This work bends gender in an already gender bent world. Omegaverse is beyond thinking outside the box when it comes to gender and sexuality by imposing an alternate universe where they forcibly

try to break the binary by creating more categories of gender and focusing their narratives on individuals that don't conform to even this new fictional norm. Omegaverse authors are trying to open the way for readers to give up preconceived notions of gender and motherhood and be receptive to a much wider viewpoint. The Omegaverse genre deserves a closer look and in-depth analysis in regard to gender and motherhood in contemporary Japan.

Conclusion

Like the specific *dōjinshi* mentioned above and other Omegaverse productions such as the works of the Omegaverse Project¹⁵, *The Change* and *Torikae Baya* are classified as gender-benders even though they far less overt in their critical approach to gender, sexuality, and motherhood. Each adaptation of *Torikaebaya* provides its own explanations for the siblings' gender situation following the culture of the time period in which it was written. The original story uses Buddhism, the 1987s uses Freudian theory and explorations of psychology, and the 2013 adaptation posits gender as a social construction and a matter of choice and while *Torikae Baya* is still an adaptation of a Heian period novel the differences and changes in the plot from the 1987 version show the confidence of the authors to apply contemporary notions of gender and sexuality and critique them at the same time.

Saitō's version of *Torikaebaya* is a fascinating story that offers a glimpse into the current construction of gender and sexuality of contemporary Japan which is shared and affected by European and North American notions of gender and sexuality. Saitō effectively deconstructs the standard or "normal" aspects of gender and sexuality in Japan to really take a look at gender performance and the formation of gender identity in connection with performance and society

¹⁵ The Omegaverse Project – A collection of 40+ works all centered in the Omegaverse by Fusion Products that is still in publication at the date of this paper.

effectively exploring and playing with normative notions of gender and sexuality. She demonstrates the changes in Japanese society through her choices of plot change and the different development of the main characters Sarasōjū and Suiren, who differ from the previous versions by more than just name.

Most scholars such as Aoyama Tomoko, Nagaike Kazumi, and Fujimoto Yukari use a psychoanalytic approach when studying manga like *The Change* and *Torikae Baya* and have simply assumed female sexuality is essentially passive. Contemporary negative views of female sexuality actually work to obscure the sexuality being expressed and explored in *shōjo* and *josei* manga at large (Nagaike and Aoyama 122). Theories continue to posit gender and sexual oppression as the main motivation for tropes within these genres however, Nagakubo Yōko's 2005 book *Yaoi shōsetsu ron* (やおい小説論) [*A Theory of Yaoi Fiction*] marks a major turning point for these scholars. In Nagakubo's studies and statistical analysis of the genre as well as the fans, the fans are stating they do not feel gender or sexual oppression and simply enjoy the genre because it is interesting (Fujimoto 84-85). Many scholars are moving towards this viewpoint and while I can agree with it to a point and see *shōjo* and *josei* as a platform for women to play with and explore both gender and sexuality, I do not fully agree that gender and sexual oppression are not felt. These manga work to subvert gender norms which show that oppression is felt on some level. However, manga is not the only element of pop culture used to subvert social norms and present critical views of society.

Pop culture is what allows large heterogeneous masses of people to identify collectively and serves as an inclusionary selector to younger generations. Knowing pop culture gives access to participate in a larger group identity that is generally accepted by the group. However, since pop culture is not controlled by the state, it presents an opportunity to push for a change in

prevailing social norms such as gender, sexuality and motherhood. People are using pop culture not only for enjoyment, but also to express feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction with society and law as well as to subvert social norms that they do not agree with. Himuro and Yamauchi's 1987 version shows the social critique that mothers were facing at the time by how they set up the siblings gender situation. They also show frustrations with the forced innocence and lack of sexual desire expected of females through Lord Kira's misunderstanding of getting pregnant through a kiss, as well as the Emperor's fear of his queer love for a man that is actually female. Saitō's 2013 version shows a critical view of accepted gender norms and the gender binary by expressing gender as a choice and showing Sarasōjū in a state of in-between after the birth of her stillborn child. Saitō works to bring the binary into question and having to choose between one or the other and having nothing in-between. In light of the recent public push to appeal forced sterilization and full transition by the 2003 Gender Identity Disorder Act this makes sense. These adaptations show the use of pop culture as exploratory, expressive, and subversive, reinforced by the production of Omegaverse works that are overtly exploratory, expressive, and subversive

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